Ontario

Ontario Women's Directorate

NEWS RELEASE

June 22, 2006

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TAKING ACTION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
'Neighbours, Friends And Families' Campaign Raises Awareness Of Abuse Against Women

TORONTO – The McGuinty government is launching a province-wide campaign to help neighbours, friends and families of abused women recognize the early signs of abuse against women and know how to help, Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, announced today.

"We are on the side of vulnerable women and their children," said Pupatello. "Everyone has a role to play in preventing domestic violence. Understanding the warning signs is an important first step, and knowing what to do when you see the signs is critical."

The McGuinty government is investing $571,925 in the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign, which will provide information to help individuals recognize the signs of abuse and know what action to take. Public service announcements, a website (www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca), brochures, a poster and wallet cards are available as part of the education campaign.

The campaign is a partnership between the Ontario government and the Expert Panel on Neighbours, Friends and Families, through the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children.

Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello at the launch of the *Neighbours, Friends and Families* public education campaign.

"We know that in many cases of domestic violence deaths, those closest to the victims and abusers do not always understand what they are seeing, know how to help the victim, or know where to turn for help in the community," said Dr. Peter Jaffe, Academic Director of the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children. "This campaign will help educate people on the signs and risk factors associated with woman abuse."

The Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign is part of the government's comprehensive Domestic Violence Action Plan that places emphasis on prevention and better community supports for abused women and their children. Initiatives under this plan include:

- $58 million over four years for community services.

- $5.9 million for training of professionals to recognize the signs of abuse earlier and give women the support they need.
- $4.9 million for a public education campaign targeting children and youth and the adults who influence them, to change attitudes and mobilize communities to stop violence before it happens.
- Improving the justice sector's supports to better protect and support women and their children, and to hold abusers accountable for violent behaviour.

"It is not easy to change attitudes and behaviours," said Pupatello. "But it is up to all of us — not just the government, not just the police, not just social services, but whole communities — to try. Women's lives depend on it."

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Valérie Poulin, Minister's Office, (416) 325-2632
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Neighbours, Friends and Families Expert Panel Members:

Backrow (left to right) – Tracey Marshall, Detective, Threat Assessment Unit, Durham Regional Police; Wendy Komiotis, Executive Director, Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC); Debbie Ball, Executive Director, Faye Peterson Transition House; Dr. Peter Jaffe, Academic Director, Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children and member of the Domestic Violence Death Review Coroner's Committee; Tim Kelly, Panel Chair, Executive Director, Changing Ways and Colleen Purdon, Consultant, Violence Against Women In Rural Settings. Front Row (left to right) – Deborah Sinclair, Consultant and member of the Domestic Violence Death Review Coroner's Committee; Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello and April Carriére, Bilingual Consultant on Violence Against Women, Comité des Femmes Francophones de London.

Neighbours, Friends and Families Expert Panel member Dr. Peter Jaffe, Academic Director, Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children; Deb Ashbee, best friend of the late Sandra Schott a domestic violence homicide victim; Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Sandra Pupatello and Tim Kelly, Expert Panel Chair and Executive Director of Changing Ways at the launch of the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign.

- **Backgrounder - Neighbours, Friends And Families Public Education Campaign**
- **Backgrounder - Neighbours, Friends And Families Expert Panel**

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